1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

621 camp together, even within the large bands, the linkage of the person to the band was on the basis of free association. Marriage was commonly intra-band when a person was a member of a larger group, but there was no fixed 591 rule of residence. Since marriage seems to have been to a great extent with-882 in the band, a couple lived customarily in the same group as both their parents. Boys of adolescent age lived in small tipis of their own, to facilitate sister-avoidance and to prepare them for vision experience. To this lodge, which was set near that of his parents, a boy brought his wife, until a growing family necessitated her building a larger dwelling. In this and in certain other respects, Comanche residence was semi-patrilocal. Children, as a [611] result, usually belonged to the band of the father.

591 But, except for habituation, there was nothing to prevent change of residence to another band at any time, mere whim being sufficient cause. 166 With a good deal of inter-visiting going on, temporary changes were fre-157 quent. An "immigrant" simply moved in. No permission was necessary. Under such circumstances rigorous superimposed control of the individual in matters of ordinary concern was impossible. Conditions were favorable for the relative individualism upon which the Comanche relied in governing his life. Mobility even provided a way of avoiding the legal consequences of a wrong. In several instances we found that a culprit joined a new band where the aggrieved might never have occasion to meet him.

621 What constituted a Comanche local group is not a problem to be settled by monistic definition. Only the larger bands received permanent recognition and a name. Thus it is not possible to state precisely how many Comanche bands there were. Mooney[11] in 1912 listed thirteen Comanche bands. Neighbors[12] in 1860 listed but eight. Lowie[13] in 1912 recorded four.

Thirteen bands were listed by the Comanche informants used in this investigation in 1933. Multiple names were used in a number of instances for a single band. These have been equated in the list given below.[14] Band names given by Mooney and Neighbors, for which no equivalents were recorded by the Sante Fe Laboratory Field Study Group, are given in the

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[11] James Mooney, *Comanche*, (Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, ed. F. H. Hodge, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30, vol. 1, 1907), pp. 328–329.

[12] R. S. Neighbors, *The Na-uni, or Comanches of Texas; Their Traits and Beliefs, and Their Divisions and Intertribal Relations* (History of the Indian Tribes of the United States, vol. 2, 1861), pp. 130–131.

[13] R. H. Lowie, *Dances and Societies of the Plains Shoshone* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, vol. 11, 1916), p. 813.

[14] Key to symbols used in the list of Comanche bands: * for names recorded by the Laboratory, † for names recorded by Mooney, ‡ for names recorded by Neighbors. Lowie gives the first four names in the list.

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across the face with his quirt. He'd never been whipped. He got to thinking about it, so he got out his gun and shot himself. The people didn't know why he did it, and suggested things out of the way. Sometimes when Indians go on a raid they catch a disease and commit suicide because they don't want to go back that way. This man was a brave warrior; he had killed lots of enemies; he had power."

Among the Comanches a sense of the injustice of a formally justifiable act at times took the form of a protest-suicide. Or perhaps it might be released in some retaliatory act, such as killing a favorite horse or mutilating the good-looking sister of the man who had pushed the law too far. A boyhood prank of Gets To Be A Middle-Aged Man produced these double repercussions of incensed reactions to an over-strict legal settlement.

Case 37. Adultery and Retaliations
Informant: Gets To Be A Middle-Aged Man

"I was down by the creek one day with a friend when a woman came down for water. She was the sister of my friend's step-mother. I proposed that we seek intercourse with her. My friend agreed. So I went over to make the proposition to the woman. She was quite willing, provided that we would wait until she had taken the bucket of water back to camp. On her return I met her first, as I had demanded the first chance. While we were together there, her sister (my friend's step-mother) saw us, but she slipped quietly into the brush and said nothing. When my friend had his turn, his step-mother again spied and saw them together. She went right away to her sister's husband and informed him of his wife's doings with us.

"The man came to my father's tipi. He told him what had happened. 'What do you intend to do about it?' he asked my father.

"We were called in and he blamed us both with adultery. I denied any contact with the wife, but when my friend was charged he boasted, 'Sure I did it. It's an honor to be able to do such a thing as that.' The husband demanded damages, and when he received two good horses from my father, he departed satisfied.

"Then my elder brother came home from a raid and heard that two horses had been given because of our activity. He was angry. He took his bow and arrow and shot two horses dead in the herd of the woman's husband.

"Nothing further happened at that time. But then the younger brother of the husband came back from a raid and heard the story. He was angry that the two horses had been shot. Thinking that his older brother had been ill-treated all around, he went over and cut off the nose of my friend's beautiful sister.'

The whole difficulty generated from the fact that the wrong-doers were youths. Adultery does give cause for suit for damages, but boys were always in a favored position and indulgence should have been shown them.

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684 Gets To Be A Middle-Aged Man denied his guilt and nothing happened.
882 The other boy boasted, aggravating the situation. The elder brother, how-
689 ever, would not be imposed upon. To him it was lack of good taste and fairness for the old man to take two horses; hence his summary retaliation. The collaterals to the other party reacted in turn to this action as indecently harsh. They retaliated with mutilation of the sister. This last retaliation should not be confused with the principle of group liability (i.e., that the sister paid because she shared the responsibility). It was rather that the sister belonged to the brother and, as a good-looking girl, had value to him. Spoiling her visage was like mutilating his horse (possibly more so).

689 So too in the murder case (pp. 66–67 above) in which a war leader was slain for killing the two fat horses which had been offered him in compensation for one fat horse of his which had been eaten without his permission. The horses were his by acknowledged agreement. But that the chief should so scornfully kill them was too much for the other party. It was an insult to a man who had sought to do right. Though the killing was undertaken by one man and his captive, yet the entire group acquiesced, making no effort to dissuade him. Their inaction showed at least passive approval.

It appears that one should not press his bald legal rights too far. Too much pressure under the wrong circumstances generated the same type of back-fire which in recent decades has troubled modern Continental lawyers with the concept of "abuse of rights."

689 The sharpest back-fire in such situations was in protest-suicide. Witness
762 the action of a disowned mother, who was rightfully denied by the son she had deserted.

Case 38. Suicide
Informant: That's It

"This woman was widowed with her four-year-old son. The band was moving camp and she had her boy tied in his little saddle on a pony. They were straggling along so much that they dropped behind the other people. A young man dropped back and proposed to the mother that they run off and marry. She agreed to that. But they did not want to be bothered with the child, so they tied his horse to a tree in the midst of a grove and left him there to starve.

"Later on some hunters, who were out after a bob-cat, came to the grove. One hunter said to the others, 'There's a horse standing over there.' The group went into the grove and saw the boy sleeping. They watched him. Some said they should wake him up. They woke him up and asked about his mother. He didn't know, but he told them the direction she had gone. The hunters followed the trail and came up to the main band. The mother was not there, so the boy was taken by his grandfather and raised to manhood, and got married.

The Comanches

883 As boys began to approach adolescence, there were a couple of years when they drew away from girls and ceased to play their childish games with them. They ran loose in gangs, racing, hunting, wrestling, and swimming. As their fathers stole stock, they rustled food from the camp. At night they liked to go armed with ropes and cut out riding horses from the herd to joyride on the prairie. If anyone discovered them, all they had to do was to get off and scatter. They were not encouraged by adults in these escapades; neither were they scolded. Their high spirits were tolerated, for that is as a Comanche should be, and marauding youngsters at night were a useful guard against enemy raiders.

593 As the boy grew into adolescence, the normal Comanche pattern demanded extreme brother-sister avoidance, even to the extent of isolating the unmarried adolescent boy in a separate tipi set up behind his parents' lodge. Here he prepared to receive power away from the contaminating grease of cooking utensils, while he was also isolated from incestuous temptation. The brother and sister could never sit close to or touch each other.[7] This social tabu was elaborated to the point where a young man might kill his sister without suffering any social disgrace or punishment if she insisted on violating it.[8]

●882 If an older boy became unruly, disrespectful, or insolent, some of the older men made him the subject of cutting sarcasm. It usually was on such an occasion that the youth could not withdraw or save his face. This form of punishment was successful in most cases. Eventually, the youth learned to conduct himself with dignity and in accordance with the social norm set by his elders. Occasionally there was a wrangle between children, but they were allowed to fight it out to the amusement of the onlookers.

881 About the time a boy retired to his own tipi, he went out on his first real buffalo hunt, and should success crown his first effort, it might be an occasion for some kind of celebration. Usually a boy learned to hunt buffalo before going on the warpath. When he had shown his ability as a hunter, he was ready and eager to go on the warpath, for most boys wished to be brave and to win war honors.

[7] Informant: See How Deep the Water Is.

[8] Informant: Kills Something. Kill Something's brother-in-law shot his sister for entering his room after he had warned her not to enter.

The Comanches

593 While a boy was growing up, a very close comradeship was likely to develop between him and a brother. The relationship between brothers became one of mutual helpfulness. It was based on mutual affection and interdependence in play, work, and war. There was no formality between them. An older brother gave the younger much helpful advice, and when they went on the warpath together, the older brother was likely to keep a watchful eye on a younger brother until he had become an experienced warrior. Even afterwards they remained closely associated and rendered mutual assistance. This relationship was carried to the point where they lent each other their wives; especially would an elderly married brother accommodate his younger unmarried brothers. However, he could expect reciprocity when the younger brother married. "He would never feel the same about his younger brother, if he refused to make it even."[11] This 572 close relationship was sometimes instituted between two friends, perhaps being more common where there was no real brother. In such a case the friend took the status of a "brother" in the relationship system of his comrade's family, assuming all the privileges and restrictions which went with the new status. Then the two friends ("brothers") were likely to marry sisters and thus become brothers-in-law, or *haints*, which is the same word as "friend."

●882 A boy's education by advice and admonition was considered to have ended with his first journey to war. He was supposed to know by this time that to gain the approbation and respect of his people he must be brave and courageous in war, wise in council, cool and fearless in the midst of danger, ardent in his friendship, charitable to the less fortunate of his community, hospitable to strangers, and enthusiastic in his patriotism and devotion to the welfare of his tribe. 582 He was likely at that time to turn part of his attention to love and courtship and marriage. It was not uncommon for the male to marry at an early age. On the other hand, he was somewhat restrained by the desire to improve his social prestige by developing a reputation as a warrior, raider, or hunter. Also, he needed horses or other plunder to secure a wife. He might, of course, persuade his father to furnish the necessary horses, but it was far more respectable for a young man to acquire his own, so Comanche boys married at later age than girls.

[11] Informant: Post Oak Jim.

9: Gladwin E-5 (1940) 1948 NO6 Comanche NO6

593 extent of opposite sex, is considered to be one of the closest. It is often said that his brothers are more dear to a man than his wife, and this is given as the reason why a man shares his wife with his younger brothers in a polyandrous [837] household. Men often leave their wives with their brothers when they go off on war-parties, and most people take it for granted that the brother will sleep with her during this time. Damage claims for wife stealing are practically never made upon brothers. It is a brother relationship to which the closest friends aspire, and they will often call each others' families by terms appropriate to this relation. Sisters, on the other hand, form the most desirable [595] combination of wives if a man is to have several, for they get along better together than any other women, and are less likely to be jealous.

[554] The oldest brother has much greater prestige than any of the others, unless he should be a complete coward and failure and have a spectacularly successful younger brother. His position is unique, for, unless he should die very young, his removal through death or moving away will not lead to the elevation of the next oldest brother to a position of special prestige. In this society of warriors, boys from puberty onward are always considered greatly superior to their sisters.

Relations between brothers and sisters are highly variable, and depend greatly upon the personalities of the individuals. The ideal picture is one of fondness and mutual help and kindness. Brothers bring their sisters horses when they return from raids, and will take their side and protect them in case of trouble; they frequently leave their wives with their sisters who will act as chaperones while they are away. A sister will care for her brother's horse when he comes in and perform many minor services for him; she may act as a messenger for an unmarried brother in arranging nocturnal trysts. But these and many other expressions of esteem and affection are only evident if they like each other.

[857] The other side of the picture reveals the fact that the oldest sibling present [576] is the boss of the others until they come of age. As the boys used to go out on war-parties as soon as they were old enough, this was usually an older sister. [195] She frequently whipped her brothers as a disciplinary measure, and often delighted in teasing them in various more or less nasty ways. The word *it'ri?aiwapi*, "slave," could be applied by an older sibling to a younger, though this was considered being particularly unpleasant, and nice children did not do it! It is significant that while it was presumably permissible, this appellation [605] was rarely if ever used between siblings of the same sex. It is emphatically stated, incidentally, that this was never applied to cousins except as a joke.

Once a boy passed puberty, he usually went out on the warpath, and was 593 therefore in imminent danger of being killed. For this reason, it is said, one 882 should let him have his way in all things. The boys do not seem to have been beyond capitalizing on this, and could and occasionally would whip their sisters even after they were married. It was the brother, more than anyone else, who

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had the right to give his sister, often against her will, to any acquaintance who gave him presents of arrows or a horse or two. A male cousin also seems to have had this right in some cases.

After the age of ten or so, brothers and sisters were supposed to avoid each other's company to a certain extent, especially if they should be left alone, and could never undress in each other's company, even if they lived in the same tipi. At the age of fifteen, boys might have a separate hut of hide-covered branches or even their own tipi in which to sleep and entertain any lady-friends they might have.[10] Brothers and sisters should not joke with each other, nor mention anything to do with relations between the sexes.

Behavior between more distantly related siblings seems to depend on how well they know and like each other and, of course, on how much they see of one another. As noted before, however, the brother-sister restrictions seem to remain in force almost indefinitely.

Parent-Child. Parents do not seem to have been unusually fond of children, especially in the old days when they were a considerable nuisance to be transported about, and guarded from danger. Discipline was largely in the hands of older siblings, as noted above, when there were any. Instruction of the girls was often taken on by the maternal grandmother, who frequently lived with the family, and the maternal uncle and older brothers taught the boys. Their father was apt to be out on the warpath, especially when they were young, and their mother was busy with the housework—cooking, making clothes, and so on.

As the children grew up, there seems to have been a gradual change in the attitude of the parents toward them. Younger children in a family, or of several families living nearby, formed a somewhat undifferentiated group; they were not mistreated, nor even seriously neglected by their parents, but were only rarely singled out for personal attention. Then, when they achieved the age of ten or so, they began to emerge as definite personalities impinging on the adult world; the father would begin to coach his son in the art of war, and the girl's mother would initiate her daughter more seriously in the housework.

Each parent usually had a favorite among the children, frequently the oldest, though a woman might spoil her youngest daughter if she realized she was to be her last. This child would receive more attention, presents, etc., than the others, who were often quite jealous. However the hostility they could express was limited, because the parent would usually side with the favorite if any squabbles occurred. Somewhat distinct from this is the quite institutionalized favorite-child pattern, found commonly in Plains societies; the Comanche themselves seem to recognize the distinction. In wealthy families, small gifts given by poorer people to the favorite child carried with them an obliga-

[10] This was done primarily to avoid harming the boys' power through contamination from the family cooking and food. Linton, personal communication.